

645 9
FREE THOUGHTS

UPON THE LATE

REGULATION OF THE POST;

By which there is an ARRIVAL to, and DE-
PARTURE of the MAIL from EDINBURGH
on the CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF A LETTER

FROM A

GENTLEMAN IN THE COUNTRY

TO HIS

FRIEND IN EDINBURGH.

EXOD. XX. 8, 9, 10. N

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not DO ANY WORK, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

EDINBURGH:

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MDCCCLXXXVII.

THE RIGHTS

UPON THE STATE

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE
IN THE SEVERAL STATES
ON THE SEVERAL SUBJECTS

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE
IN THE SEVERAL STATES



THE STATE OF NEW YORK

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE
IN THE SEVERAL STATES
ON THE SEVERAL SUBJECTS

THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE
IN THE SEVERAL STATES
ON THE SEVERAL SUBJECTS

A L E T T E R, &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU hint to me the advantage to trade produced by the present regulation of the post. — Permit me, in my turn, in the most serious and scriptural form, to represent to you my views of it. Allow me, with compassion, to attempt saving you with fear, pulling you out of the fire; to cry aloud as one not ashamed of Christ's ways and words in this sinful and adulterous generation, that he may not be ashamed of me when he comes in his glory to judge the world, Jude 22, 23. Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. Passing the inhuman cruelty to the horses employed, contrary to Prov. xii. 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast*; and the exposure of the lives of either drivers, guard, or persons which they meet by the way, I shall consider it only in its connection with the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath. Taking what happens in Edinburgh, as a sample of what happens in other places where there is an arrival and departure of the Post upon that day; what a bustle of worldly labour takes place at the Post-office, in delivering, receiving, or sorting the letters! What a similar bustle follows among bankers, merchants, lawyers, and others, in receiving, paying for, reading, considering, and answering them! All calculated to hinder them

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from the divinely instituted worship of God, or at least to unfit their minds for the right performance of it! In the view of these things I cannot but look on it as—contrary to the laws of both church and state;—contrary to the law of God;—contrary to the most conclusive and constraining reasons assigned by God;—contrary to your own most solemn vows;—and calculated not only to promote the hurt and ruin of the nation, but also to promote the eternal damnation of multitudes.

1. It is plainly contrary to the laws of both church and state in this country. Many acts after the reformation, between 1638 and 1650, and since the Revolution, have been made by the general assemblies of our church for preventing the profanation, and promoting the strict sanctification of the Sabbath. Many have been made by our parliaments for the same purpose; as act 35th, parl. 5. of James III. act 83d. parl. 6. of James IV. which enacts, that no fairs be held on holy days. Act 70th, parl. 6. James VI. which enacts, that no markets or fairs be on Sabbath, and no handy-labour used on it, under pain of ten shillings; nor any games, play, passing to taverns or alehouses, selling of meat or drink, or wilful absence from the kirk, in the time of sermons or prayers, under pain of twenty shillings; and that offenders, unable or unwilling to pay, be put in the joggs or stocks. Act 159. parl. 13. James VI. which enacts, that persons who sell, or offer to sale, any goods on the Sabbath

bath, and shall be three times convicted thereof, shall have all their goods confiscated, and their persons ly at the king's mercy. Act 18th, parl. 1. sess. 1. and act 22d, parl. 2. sess. 3. of Charles II. which prohibits all fishing of salmon, going of salt pans, mills or kilns, hiring of shearers, carrying of loads, keeping of markets, or dealing in merchandise on that day, and all other profanation of the Sabbath, under pain of twenty pounds for some, and ten for others of these crimes; and enacts, that persons who cannot pay, suffer in their bodies. These, and like acts, I find ratified by several acts of parliament under King William. Can you pretend that the bustle about worldly business occasioned by the new regulation of the post in Edinburgh, is more innocent, or less calculated to hinder the sanctification of the Sabbath, than what is expressly prohibited by these acts? or, that it becomes a Christian to indulge himself in habitual rebellion against such salutary institutions of church or state? And hath not God expressly declared, that such as resist the higher powers in their lawful appointments, resist his ordinance, and shall receive to themselves damnation, Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

2. It is contrary to the law of the great God, who liath the disposal not only of our worldly, but also of our spiritual and eternal estate, in his hand. None of his commandments, by which he, our now all-seeing Observer, shall judge us at the last day, before an assembled world of angels and men, according to the deeds done in

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our body, 2 Cor. v. 10. Eccl. xii. 14.; none of his ten commandments, which prescribe holiness and virtue in their whole extent, is delivered in so express, so solemn, and copious phrase as this which respects the sabbath. *Remember*, saith God, *the sabbath-day*, hinting, that however much men be tempted or inclined to it, it is at their infinite peril, if they forget or neglect the proper observation of it. He solemnly chargeth us, not to keep it idly, or in worldly employments or recreations, but to *remember it, to keep it holy*, that is, as devoted to the worship of God, and the spiritual and eternal concerns of our precious and immortal souls. He peremptorily chargeth us to do *no work*, no carnal or worldly work, neither ourselves, nor our *son*, nor *daughter*, nor *man-servant*, nor *maid-servant*, nor *cattle*, nor the *stranger that is within our gates*. By this particular enumeration, he manifests, that parents, masters, and magistrates are bound by his awful and infinite authority, and as they shall answer to him in the last judgement, not only to keep holy the Sabbath themselves, but to cause all under their charge and power to sanctify it, Exod. xx. 8, 10. In many other parts of his word, he further explains this commandment. In Exod. xvi. 22.—30. he prohibits the Israelites to look for any manna on the Sabbath, and sent none. In Exod. xxxi. 13.—16. he adds, *My sabbaths ye shall keep, that ye may know that I the Lord do sanctify you: Ye shall keep the sabbath.*

bath, it is holy unto God. Six days may work be done; but on the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy or holiness to the Lord. Whosoever doth any work on the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. Lev. xix. 3. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, I am the Lord your God. Lev. xxiii. 3. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work thereon: It is a sabbath of rest in all your dwellings. Deut. v. 12. Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. In Isa. lviii. 13. he requires us to turn away our foot from the sabbath, from doing our pleasure on his holy day; and to call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and to honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasures, nor speaking our own words. He commanded a man to be stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath-day, Num. xv. 33.—36. His Spirit directed, and his oracles approve Nehemiah's magistratical restraint of bearing of burdens and selling of fish and other victuals and goods on the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 15.—22. Now, Sir, can you so much as pretend that the bearing, delivering, receiving, reading, considering, and answering a multitude of letters about trifles or worldly business on the Sabbath, is a remembering of it to keep it holy, as a day holy to the Lord our God, the whole time of which is to be spent in the public and private exercises of his worship, except so much as must be taken up in works

works of necessity, which could not be transacted the day before, or delayed till the day after; or in works of mercy to the bodies or souls of men? Can you pretend that in all this men do *no manner of work*, bear no burden, make no traffic, in paying postage, or the like; but call the Sabbath a *delight*, not *finding their own pleasures*, nor *doing their own ways*, nor *speaking their own words*. No, your conscience, unless strangely biased, must grant that it is a plain rebellion against the Lord our God, who made, who preserves us, who gave his Son to redeem us, who is now our all-seeing witness, and will quickly be our impartial Judge. Think seriously who hath ever hardened himself in rebellion against God's laws, and prospered? Job ix. 4.

3. It tramples on all the infinitely powerful motives or reasons with which God himself hath enforced his command, in order to promote the exact observation of it. He hath allowed us six days every week for our own employments: *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work*. Doth not God know what time is sufficient for mens worldly business, as well as any of our British governors or subjects? Hath he allowed us for our worldly employments, six times as much time as he hath reserved for himself; and will we notwithstanding rob him, in order to have more? Are not six days spent in due labour, sufficient to make our bodies need a day of rest and refreshment? Are not six days spent in thoughts and cares about the things of this transitory

transitory world, sufficient to make our immortal soul need and long for one to be spent in fellowship with God, and in securing our everlasting enjoyment of him?

God challengeth a *special propriety* in the Sabbath-day. *It is*, saith he, *the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*. Is it too much for Jehovah our maker, preserver, and redeemer, who graciously grants us all our time, all our opportunities, strength for, and success in our worldly labours, to claim a seventh part of it for his special worship and service, that thereby he may prepare us for the most happy and everlasting enjoyment of himself? If his claim be just, why rob him of his property, or any part of it? How inconsistent to hold infamous and hang thieves and robbers of men, and to indulge, nay, to encourage a weekly robbing of God himself, by multitudes of the nation? Mat. iii. 8, 9.

Is the Sabbath the *property* of the Lord our God? then in our indulged robbing him of it, we not only renounce him as our commanding Lord, but as the everlasting God and portion of our souls. Will all the worldly gain procured by arrival of mails on Sabbath counterbalance the loss? *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Mat. xvi. 26.

The religious observation of the Sabbath stands further enforced by the *example* of God himself. *In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh,*

seventh, Exod. xx. 11. and xxxi. 17. Why did the almighty Creator, who fainteth not, neither is weary, rest in this manner, but to enforce the observation of his Sabbath by his own pattern. While the patterns of the great, in dress or conduct, are so eagerly followed in Britain, must only that of the infinitely high, holy, and only wise God, recommended by himself, be contemned? Besides,

God hath *blest* the Sabbath-day, and *hallowed* it. He hath set it apart, not only for his own worship, but for bestowing spiritual blessings upon men, and even promoting their temporal happiness in the right observation of it. Is the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it; are all his spiritual and external blessings in Christ Jesus, fit to be forfeited, in order to receive our letters respecting trade, or perhaps trifles, a day, or even a few hours sooner? What, if while you regale your soul on the Sabbath with such letters, or with prospects of wealth, God say unto you, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall these things be?* Luke xii. 20. Nay, what will it avail you to live, and heap up wealth as the dust, if not the blessing, but the curse of God attend it? What vanity and vexation of spirit; what cares, what losses and disappointments, without grace, or even patience to bear them, will ensue? Or, which is inexpressibly worse, your trade, your riches, will become your snare and trap; will
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decoy you from all proper thoughts and care about your eternal salvation; lead you into further degrees or new forms of wickedness, and thus ripen you for deeper damnation in hell. *If any man love the world, the love of God is not in him,* 1 John ii. 15. *Whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God,* James iv. 4. The minders of *earthly things* are *enemies of the cross of Christ*, and their *end is destruction*, Phil. iii. 18, 19. *The love of money is the root of all evil, which while men covet after, they err from the faith, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows,* 1 Tim. vi. 10. *Your riches are corrupted, your garments moth-eaten, your gold and silver cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and eat your flesh as fire,* James v. 2, 3.

In fine, the observation of the Christian Sabbath is the honourable commemoration of the resurrection of our divine Redeemer, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again on it for our justification. It is the season which he hath appointed for the recording of his name, and his coming to bless men, see them again, and make their heart to rejoice, Mat. xxviii. Mark xvi. Luke xxvi. John xx. Must we Britons forbear worldly labour, and at no small expence, celebrate the birth-day of our earthly sovereign; and shall we dislike, shall we grudge duly to commemorate the day on which our King of kings, the great God our Saviour, was born again from the dead to everlasting glory

and honour, when the whole observation is calculated to promote our real, our inconceivable and everlasting advantage? Are you, Sir, and your fellow neglecters of this duty, in order to push your worldly concerns, never affected with these dreadful words, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. *Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*, Rev. i. 7.

4. By such conduct you and your fellows plainly, publicly, and perjuriously violate your solemn vows to God. In your baptism you solemnly renounced the devil, and his temptations and works; the world in its patterns, riches, honours, and pleasures; and the flesh, or indwelling corruption of your nature, with all its affections and lusts:—And avouched Jehovah as your Father, Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier; and engaged perpetually to be wholly and only the Lord's. Perhaps you and they have often renewed this vow at the Lord's table. Ever since your baptism, these divine Persons have been heaping their undeserved favours upon you, in giving you life, health, food, raiment; nay, which are inexpressibly more valuable, a Christian education, gospel offers of salvation, if not also, strivings of the Holy Ghost with your conscience to bring you to Christ. And will you requite his kindness with hatred?

hatred? Know you not, that he hath led and taught you to go, and hath bestowed these things upon you? Hath he filled you with his bounty; and shall your heart be exalted, and forget him? Hof. xiii. 6. Hath he fattened you with his outward favours, and will you forsake him, kick against him, and lightly esteem the Rock of your salvation, Deut. xxxii. 13, 14. in preferring the sorting, bearing, delivering, reading, considering, or answering of letters about worldly business, which, in respect of the timing of them, are imitations of the world, and works of the flesh and devil, to God's solemn worship, and delightful fellowship with him on his Sabbath?

5. Such profanation of the Sabbath hath a powerful tendency to bring ruin and misery on our country and kingdom. Rebellion against God, profanation of his Sabbaths, and robbing him of his property, provoke him to curse our basket and our store, the fruit of our body and land, increase of our kine, and flocks of our sheeps, Deut. xxviii. 15.—20. to take away and destroy what he had given us, Hof. ii. 8.—12. to curse our whole nation, Mal. iii. 8, 9. to render our land desolate, Amos viii. 5, 7, 8. Ezek. xx. 21, 24, 33. Jer. xvii. 22, 24,—27. Men refusing to keep God's Sabbath from polluting it, that he may bring them to his holy mountain, and hold fellowship with them, and make them joyful in his house of prayer, provoke him to depart from them, leaving

leaving a wo behind him ; and to give them up to their own heart's lusts, that they may walk in counsels of their own, Isa. lvi. 4.—7. Hof. ix. 12. Psal. lxxxix. 11, 12.

Nothing more effectually tends to banish virtue, and introduce all manner of vice into a nation, than the indulged public profanation of the Sabbath. The Christian Sabbath, and all the ordinances to be observed in it, are calculated to promote the knowledge, belief, and impression of the existence, infinity, supreme authority, unbounded wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God, and of his future judgement of the world, and the infinitely important and everlasting consequences of it. Such views, belief, and impressions are the most powerful determents from vice, and excitements to virtue of every kind. By a cordial and spiritual sanctification of the Sabbath, we enjoy familiar fellowship with Christ, and his Father, and Spirit ; and receive out of his fulness grace, which effectually teacheth, and enableth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present sinful world, Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. And hence the truly strict observers of the religious duties of the Sabbath, have, in every age, been the most exact practisers of virtue. But neglect of Sabbath-sanctification, and especially the indulged or authorised public profanation of it, tends to prevent, or root out, all proper knowledge, belief, or impression

sion of God's existence and perfections, and of the future judgement and eternal state, from which all the proper obligations and motives to hate and restrain from vice are derived. Hence having no faith, or fear of God before their eyes, men abandon themselves to every form of vice, dishonesty, theft, whoredom, murder, treachery, treason, &c. which of themselves render a nation miserable, and also draw down the ruinous judgements of God upon it, Exod. v. 2, 5. Psal. x. 6.—10, 11, 12. xiv. 1,—4. and xxxvi. 1,—4. Rom. i. 21.—32. Eph. iv. 17, 18. 19. Isa. xxiv. 5, 6. and v. 11,—30. Hos. iv. 1,—3. Mic. vii. 1.—6. Malefactors in prisons, and on gibbets, have often acknowledged that their vicious course began in profanation of the Sabbath.

As the profanation of the Sabbath in the capital cities of the nation, of which I now write, confirms and encourages a continuance and progress in every other form of it, by worldly labour, carnal recreations, merchandise, &c. God alone knows how quickly this, or the following generation, having no proper impression of God's existence and perfections; no regard to his word or ordinances; no concern about the future judgement, or their eternal state, may render the nation absolutely miserable, by their blasphemy of God, treachery and rebellion against rulers, unnatural behaviour to relations, malice, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, uncleanness, unfaithfulness

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to trust, forgery, theft, robbery, fraudulent bankruptcy, perjury, and the like.

6. All the above hints concur to manifest, that it hath a natural tendency to promote the eternal damnation of multitudes in the present and future generations. The great God, who cannot lie, hath declared, that *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of God's law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish is to every soul of man that doth evil*, Rom. ii. 8, 9. Isa. iii. 11. that *the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*, Psal ix. 17. that *sinners in Zion, who have access to God's word and ordinances of salvation, shall dwell with everlasting burnings*, Isa. xxxiii. 14. that at the last day Jesus Christ *shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all them who know not God, and obey not the gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*, 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9. Are not these words enough to make the heart of Sabbath profaners to tremble, unless all impressions of the most high God, and of the eternal state be already rooted out of their mind and conscience.

Tell me not, Sir, that as they have opportunity, multitudes concur with you in your profanation of the Sabbath. God hath expressly prohibited us to follow a multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2. He hath declared, that
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wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it, Mat. vii. 13, 14. If to follow the multitude you profane the Lord's day, will you choose to have your soul gathered with sinners at your death? Will you, from love to the multitude, choose to stand at Christ's left hand in the last judgment, and to receive their dreadful sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels?* Will you to share with them in their everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, where they have no rest day nor night, but are for ever tormented, in the presence of the holy angels, and of the Lamb. If you do not, never make their conduct either the rule or excuse of yours. *Be not conformed unto this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 2.*

Pretend not that what I condemn as profanation of the Sabbath, is authorized by the civil governors of Britain, and at least silently approved by the ecclesiastical. We ought to obey God rather than men, Acts iv. 19, and v. 29. *That which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God, Luke*

xvi. 15. *If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*, Mat. xv. 14. Men are often ruined in time, and damned through eternity, by willingly walking after human commandments, Hos. v. 11. Mic. vi. 16. Are these governors your supreme God, who made or preserves you? Will their being on your side secure the friendship of JEHOVAH the most High over all the earth? Will it prevent or mitigate his dreadful indignation? Will they effectually intercede for you in the last judgement? Will their power protect you from, or support you under the pains of hell?

Plead not the speedy conveyance, the convenience, the advantage of the arrivals and offsetting of the mails on Sabbath. As you and all men were made for eternity, nothing is in the main convenient or advantageous, but what is either directly or indirectly conducive to your eternal welfare. Dispatch, convenience, and advantage, which entice and lead men to neglect the concerns of their soul, to sin against God, are but ensnaring traps, or tempting baits, tending to promote and secure their eternal damnation.

Let me conclude, earnestly beseeching you, as in the sight of God, and in the view of your and my future appearance before his judgement-seat, to give the above lines a serious and impartial consideration. They have proceeded from a heart which earnestly wishes both you temporal and your eternal welfare.

Yours, &c.



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